



AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

Caroline E. Spiese for the degree of Master of Arts in Applied Anthropology presented on June 8, 2016

Title: Internal Migration: The role of discrimination and regionalism in Southern Italians' self construction of identity

Abstract approved:

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Italian nationalism and an 'Italian' identity were constructed during Italy's unification movement in the mid 1800's. However, consensus on a national identity is still weak across Italy today. Instead, a polarization of Northern and Southern regions have contributed to discrimination, institutional racism and exclusion. This thesis demonstrates the multifaceted aspects of regionalism and internal migration, and their effects on Southern Italians' view of identity, regionalism, and how their position as the 'other' contributes to their lived experience. This is supported by historical and political background information on Italy and the Emilia-Romagna region, relevant newspaper articles and political cartoons as well as qualitative fieldwork with Southern Italian migrants living in the northern city of Ferrara. This ethnographic case study highlights the growing global trends of regionalism and migration, in order to discover how migrants shape their regional identities.

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Internal Migration: The Role of Discrimination and Regionalism in Southern Italians'  
Self Construction of Identity

by  
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A THESIS

Submitted to

Oregon State University

In partial fulfillment of  
the requirements for the  
degree of

Master of Arts

Presented June 8, 2016  
Commencement June 2017

Master of Arts thesis of Caroline E. Spiese presented on June 8, 2016.

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I understand that my thesis will become part of the permanent collection of Oregon State University libraries. My signature below authorizes release of my thesis to any reader upon request.

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Caroline E. Spiese, Author

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to extend my gratitude to my advisor, Dr. David McMurray, as well as my committee members, Dr. Fina Carpena-Mendez and Dr. Adam Schwartz, for their support, feedback, thought provoking discussions, and guidance in completing my thesis. I would also like to thank Dr. James Myers for helping in my final stages as my Graduate Council Representative. I also appreciate the guidance of Dr. Lisa Leimar Price and Irene Rolston in my research and teaching endeavors.

I am indebted for my Italian family, Pietro, Maria, and Ludovica, who welcomed me into their family as an undergraduate studying abroad, introduced me to my research topic, and provided me a home once again while conducting my fieldwork. Thank you also to my research participants for sharing their stories and experiences with me.

Finally, and most importantly, this degree wouldn't have been possible without the loving encouragement from my parents, Paul and Theresa Spiese, who have been my biggest supporters since day one. I am also truly grateful for all the support I've received from my cohort, friends and family. Specifically, Mostafa Estaji, who kept me fed and calm during the final stages of thesis writing and my defense presentation. You all mean the world to me, and I could not have done this without you.

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## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

In this thesis, I will discuss the major themes of regionalism, migration, discrimination, and identity by using my fieldwork with Southern Italians living in the Northeastern city of Ferrara, Italy. For this topic, it is necessary to look at historic, economic, political, linguistic, and ethnic borders within Italy. For instance, it is difficult to discuss the economic disparity, which led to my participants' migration north, without discussing the argument of the historic mercantile nature of the North that led to the North's ease into industrialization as well as the government policies that maintained the dual systems of the industrial Northern and the agricultural Southern economies (Acquaviva and Santuccio 1976, Mingione 1993, Johnson and Coleman 2012). It is also necessary to look at the ethnic borders created by the Northern political party, Lega Nord, which have played a role in Italy's recent political and ethnic instability and racial political discourse (Giordano 2000, *Polity IV Country Report 2010: Italy*).

This thesis investigates how the historical and current regional divide impacts Southern Italian migrants living in Northern Italy. Mingione (1993) attributes the recent regional discrimination between the North and South of Italy to the economic slow down in the 1970's. He argues that the "fragmentation and the strains on the nation-state are increased by both the crisis in hegemony and the persistence of localistic features" (Mingione 1993:317). North-South regional tensions have



remained since this time due to the polarization of wage inequalities, globalization and mechanization (Mingione 1993). At the same time, globalization has led to a revival of local solidarity. This is a factor in Lega Nord's popularity. Lega Nord, a Northern regional political party, has led to new forms of racial, local, and national discourse, which impacts Italy's political stability and legitimacy due to the increased volatility against the Italian national political system and Southern Italy.

By looking at internal migration, it should be noted that the migratory experience of my participants is not one that deals with the concern of citizenship, which is present in many migration studies (Faist 2000, Finotelli and Sciortino 2009, Vertovec 2011). Therefore, even though Southern Italians face political discrimination, they still maintain the security of national citizenship. The main objective of my research and this thesis is to explore the implications of the discrimination against Southern Italians living in the northern town of Ferrara, Italy. While a significant amount of literature exists on this North-South division and the regional differences between them, my thesis situates itself within the internal migration literature in order to bring further understanding to the migratory experience. It also highlights the experience of the Southern 'other' by utilizing historical and racial political discourse to add to the discussion of migrant identity. Research differs on the border of the North-South divide in Italy (Giordano 2000, Capussotti 2010). The division in Italy could be in Naples, Rome, or even as far north as the Po River Valley where this research was conducted. The contested border highlights the continued division that exists within Italy. These borders cause issue

for internal migrants as they try to navigate life in Northern Italy. This thesis argues that there is a dualistic regionalism between the North and South, which causes numerous borders Southern Italians navigate in their daily lives in the North.

### My Interest

I started learning Italian as a freshman in high school. My maternal grandfather was a first generation Italian immigrant, and since I had to pick a language to fulfill my high school requirements, I decided to take Italian. This choice was made because while I knew the heritage existed, no one in my family actually spoke Italian nor talked about many Italian traditions. At fourteen, I didn't really think about the significance of my decision. I just wanted to learn more about my ancestry.

However, it led to studying Italian for four years in high school, and three more years in college. Knowing the language then guided my choice to study abroad in the small city of Ferrara. I fell in love with the city and the people in it and I wanted to go on for a Master's degree so that I could study Italy further. Therefore, after many years of learning, my 14-year-old decision culminated in this thesis project studying Italian migrants.

Coming to graduate school, I knew I wanted to continue studying Italian culture, but was unsure of my focus. While studying abroad in Ferrara, Italy, I lived with a host family that had migrated north from Naples. Living with them, I began to learn of the regional differences that exist in Italy. How dialect and grammar choices are different. How the foods are different based on local and regional availability. How

the unification of Italy happened relatively late, and all the different regions had different histories. How the Northerners are cold and uninviting while the Southerners are hotheaded but welcoming. My advisor suggested that I consider studying the Southern Italian migratory experience and utilize my host family's network. I was immediately attracted to the idea, and this thesis is the result of that interest. It wasn't until recently in a class on language and race that I realized the parallels that existed between my family's experience as the 'other' and my choice to study migrants currently experiencing life as the 'other.' My participants' stories in many ways have links to my own personal story. While I will try to remain an objective researcher, it is important to note my position and connection to the topic in the following chapters.

My grandfather was the first generation in his family to be born in the United States. His family had come to the US from Italy in 1890. Growing up, I always heard of my grandpa's negative experience as a child of Italian immigrants. If race was ever brought up in my house, my mom would say that everyone should be treated with equal respect regardless of the color of their skin or where they were from. As a child, I thought this was my mom's way of teaching me strong morals, but when I was older, I discovered my family's particular connection to these beliefs stem from racial views of Italian immigrants. My grandfather grew up in a time when Italian Americans were not considered to be white and were racially oppressed. As Guglielmo (2003) explains, Italians remained in poorer and in working class neighborhoods longer than other Europeans who migrated in the same period. This

experience “has given Italians a particular anxiety to assert a white identity in order to effectively distance themselves from their Brown and Black neighbors, and receive the ample rewards that come with being white” (2003:4). This anxiety can be seen in my grandfather’s refusal to speak or teach his children Italian. I also recently discovered that my grandparents were thought to have a ‘mixed marriage’ because while my grandpa was an Italian American, my grandmother was English and Welsh. This ‘mixing’ only further highlights the racial separation of Italians in the United States during the 1950’s. I was not told stories of Italian family traditions my mom had as a child, but instead learned many of them in my Italian classes. I desired to go to Italy as a way of learning more about my ancestry and heritage partially because it was not something I learned at home.

While studying abroad in Ferrara, I learned more about Italian history, and that while my grandfather’s family moved to the United States, many Italians migrated to northern Italy. The Southern Italian experience in the northern Italy was similar to the stories I heard about my grandfather’s youth. These historic Southern Italians were considered to be the racial ‘other’ by Northern Italians, and worked in manual labor positions, which also kept them in working class neighborhoods (Albahari 2008). I became very close with my host family during my first stay in Ferrara. We would have dinner together almost every night. I even went on vacation with them back to Naples for their niece’s graduation. Many recent Southern Italians I met through my host family had migrated north with professional degrees. While their background was one of education, I discovered that the Southern Italian was still

considered to be the backwards Southern 'other' by many Northerners. Through conversations with my host mom, I began to see a trend from our discussions of dialect and Maria's constant explanation of what makes the North and South different, which includes customs, habits, social norms, and food. This experience gave me a strong sense that regionalism was an ever-present aspect of daily Italian life, and not just an academic phenomenon. This experience led me to my research project. Much has been written on the strength of regionalism, the North-South divide, and the stereotyped prejudices that exist in Italy. I however, wanted to learn more and write about the experiences of Southern Italian migrants and their lived experiences with this regional divide.

#### Research questions and preview of chapters

My fieldwork was conducted between July and September of 2013 in the northeastern town of Ferrara in the Emilia-Romagna region. It was my goal in this research to examine internal migration and the role this experience played in identity formation. I did this by studying the following questions:

- Do Italians form regional identities? Why do they choose this regional identification instead of a national one?
- How have Italian migrants' perceptions of identity been altered by their move to the Emilia-Romagna region and Ferrara specifically?

- What role do politics and regional political rhetoric play in the formation of regional identities? How has this rhetoric contributed to the migrant experience?

Chapter 2 is a historical background, which is an important and necessary chapter of this project in order to understand the context and environment in which the research participants live. This chapter briefly covers the historic regionalism in Italy as well as analyzing the political events that have contributed to regionalism and stereotyped sentiments. The context provided by this chapter is important for the subsequent chapters that draw on this historical information to enrich the analysis. Chapter 3 is a review of the literature. This section includes a brief overview of my main key terms and the specific definitions I use for them. These key terms include: identity, regionalism, migration, discrimination and racism. Chapter 4 explains the qualitative research techniques, which were utilized during my fieldwork. Chapter 5 and 6 explains the results of my fieldwork in Ferrara, Italy. These results chapters discuss my participants' motivations for migration, their views on regionalism and the role internal migration played in their identity formation. I end with Chapter 6, which provides a conclusion and further discussion for future research.

## **Chapter 2: Historical Background**

It is necessary to recognize Italy's history and development in order to understand Italian social structure and the dualist nature of the country today (Acquaviva and Santuccio 1976). When explaining how or why the country functions as it does, my participants often cited history which only gives further reasoning for including the historical context. Italy has a long written history, and therefore this section gives an overview of Italian history as it contributes to regionalism and the discourse of the North-South divide. This chapter will begin with a brief explanation of Italian Unification to discuss how Southern Italy was a liberated colony of the North. The next section will provide some understanding of the economic divide – why regionalism is so strong in Italy, the influence of the Fascist era, and the various waves of internal migration. Finally, I will conclude this chapter with a look at the Italian political system, which will further illustrate the Northern dominance in politics and policy which adds to the discourse on regionalism, racism, and the Southern Italian 'other.'

### **A Unified Italy**

According to some historians, a unified Italian nation didn't come into existence until 1870 (De Angelo 2006). Mazzini, Garibaldi, Cavour and Victor Emmanuel, the nations founding fathers, fought to unite the peninsula and remove foreign and papal influences (De Angelo 2006). History books about Italy explain the desire for

unification and the sense of nationalism that led to a unified Italy (De Angelo 2006). However, this rhetoric leaves out an important aspect of Northern domination. As Pugliese (2008) explains, unification occurred in 1861, but was contested with the 'Cafona' Wars in which Southern insurgents continued to fight against the single nation state from 1861-1870. By simply looking at the two different dates of unification, we can see an erasure of Southern resistance to the unified Italy. By looking deeper into these years we can begin to understand how this erasure occurred and the lasting impact it still has on Italy today.

It is important to note that the 'founding fathers' of Italy were Northern political leaders, and that the movement for a united Italy began in the northeastern Piedmont region (Salomone 1974). Initial Northern rhetoric around the Unification spoke of the "occupation" of the South by foreigners and the liberation of Italy from these foreign influences (Salomone 1974). In the beginning years of the Italian Republic, the strength of regionalism was a significant fear, and this led to the centralization of government power (Smith 1974). In fact, the centralization of the Italian government during the unification has been termed "Piedmontization" by historians (Aquarone 1974). In order to maintain power, the North used colonial methods and ideology in order to turn Southern Italy into a Piedmontese province (Pugliese 2008). The school of Meridionalisti (Southernists) was created by a group of social and biological Northern scientists in order to create the Southern colony. As an example of the regional rhetoric created, the group created the term 'brigandage' which was used to turn Southern independence fighters into a group of



savage, petty criminals (Pugliese 2008). The term 'cafone' which came from a Southern Italian language as an adjective to describe a poor Southern peasant instead became synonymous throughout with characteristics such as barbaric, uncivilized, lazy, and backward (Scarpino 2005).

Therefore, from the time of Unification, the geopolitical power existed in the North and the national identity discourse was centered on the ideal Northern Italians with Southern Italian culture becoming the de facto 'other' and the 'Southern Problem' (Smith 1974). The North-South dichotomy that was created by the School of Meridionalisti can still be seen today in some of the stereotypes that are used to explain Northern and Southern personalities; Northern are hard working, and smart while Southerners are poor and lazy. A table of modern Northern and Southern stereotypes as explained by my participants can be found in Appendix I.

### The Fascist Era

The rise of Fascism in the 1920's led to significant changes in Italian nationalism and migratory practices. The Mussolini regime was against Fordist industrialization and enacted policies in order to curb urbanization and emigration. Much of this nationalist rhetoric pushed for a return to traditional practices and family life. It was also in this period that unification of language and education practices began. No longer were dialects allowed in schools or used for legislation, but instead the specific Northern Florentine dialect became the language known today as Italian (Smith 1974).

The North eased into industrialization with the aid of government policies that maintained the dual systems of the industrial Northern and agricultural Southern economies. In the 1920's and 1930's, Mussolini also pushed for ruralization policies to limit rural to urban migration (Caprotti 2008). These policies led to the development of villages in the Southern marshy region of Lazio and the "internal colonization" rhetoric of the regime. (Caprotti 2008). Many of these internal migrants came from densely populated northern regions. They were often coerced and selected for this migration because they were either socially or politically undesirable to Mussolini (Caprotti 2008).

While Mussolini enacted policies to increase nationalism, his regime also increased sentiments of racism and anti-Semitism. In 1938, the "Manifesto degli Sciziati Razzisti" or the "Manifesto of Racial Sciences" was published (Smith 2014). The ideology of the manifesto continued the work of the Meridionalisti and promoted biological racism as a scientific fact. The discourse of the Manifesto included anti-African and anti-Semitic language while promoting the purity of the Aryan Italian race (Gillette 2001). The Manifesto explained that the majority of Italians shared ancestry with Germans and Northern Europeans rather than North Africans. While this Manifesto greatly aligned with Hitler's fascist agenda, it is important to note the specific impact it has on Italian society and views towards racism. Prior to the Manifesto being published, ideology of racism as biological was not present in Italian thought (Smith 2014). The Manifesto linked Italians to their Germanic Aryan

white ancestry. This led to a further North-South division as the Germanic heritage and history was only linked to Northern Italians. By explaining the biological hierarchy and place for those with African decent, the Manifesto gave further justification for discrimination of Southern Italians who had historically been linked to North Africa (Smith 2014).

### Historic North-South ties and their impact on the dual economies

During the industrial era, internal migration in Italy included both Southern and Northeastern migration to the industrialized Northwest (Capussotti 2010).

However, both the media and the government created a discourse of only South to North migration (Capussotti 2010). At one point during Italy's industrialization, the South was considered to be a colony of the North because of the cheap reserve of manpower it provided for Northern industries (Acquaviva and Santuccio 1976). There was some level of mutual reciprocity between the North and South in the 1950's and 1960's (Capussotti 2010). The South provided labor for the Northern industries and, due to remittances, the North's industries provided an external income for families in the South (Capussotti 2010).

This symbiotic relationship began to change in the 1970's as the North's economic growth evened and eventually declined (Mingione 1993). With the decline in industrial growth, the discourse around Italy's industrialization began to change. Instead of a mutually beneficial arrangement between the North and South, the South now was benefitting without contributing to Italy's industrialization. The

South and Southern Italians became the scapegoat for Italy's economic crisis (Stacul 2005).

To understand the current regional divide in Italy, we need to look at Mingione's (1993) argument about the economic slow down of the 1970's. He explains that this recession led to wage inequalities, greater international trade, and mechanization. While increasing globalization, it also led more consumers to focus on buying local (Mingione 1993). He argues that globalization is one of the main factors that impacts the "structure of social identities in relation to different divisions and hierarchies of territorial units" (Mingione 1993:307). In Italy, this is important because it impacts the regional hierarchy that was created during industrialization; the South was the breadbasket, which provided food for the country, while the North focused on industry.

Globalization has become increasingly important because technology has impacted human mobility and communication. This mobility has complicated identity because it has given rise to multi-cultures instead of creating a homogenous national population. The rise in globalization has also led to an inverse response. A revival of regional and local solidarity in Europe has led to many diverse movements such as the Slow Food movement, which was founded in Italy in 1986, to the Lega Nord, which started in 1991 as a regionally driven political party (Daes and Lord 2006, Slow Food 2016, Lega Nord 2016). However, as we will discuss throughout this

thesis, this has led to new forms of racism, localism, and nationalism which impacts Italy's political stability and legitimacy due to the increased volatility.

### The Italian democracy

Historically, regions in the north of Italy had maintained somewhat stable kingdoms while multiple foreign colonial rulers had dominated the South (Fukuyama 2013).

The Italian regions formed a united nation-state in 1870 under the monarch King Emmanuel II (Pugliese 2008). Italy became democratic after WWII and the fall of the Fascist party. Italy intentionally created a system with a weak President that also requires a Prime Minister to have a majority in both houses of Parliament. These choices were designed to account for Italy's regional variations as well as preventing a leader such as Mussolini from ever taking power again. Today the Italian Republic is made up of fifteen regions and five autonomous regions with separate executive, legislative, and judiciary branches. Since the constitution came into effect in 1948, Italy has had 61 governments (Polity IV Country Report 2010). Italian Republic was formed to allow for more regional power, and the number of government switches illustrates the struggle for power that continues within Italy. The lines between political parties, civil services, the media, businesses and the judiciary can easily be bent which has filled government institutions with corruption and uncertainty.

The current electoral system has created the necessity for the numerous small political parties to form coalitions in order to create a majority. This system therefore allows small parties to have significant amounts of power when they

threatened to leave a coalition because it could cause a coalition to lose their majority (The Economist 2013). When this research was conducted, the largest coalitions include the Center-Right coalition, the Italy Common Good coalition, and the With Monti for Italy coalition (World Fact Book 2014). Other minor parties and coalitions include Civil Revolution, Act to Stop the Decline and the Five Star Movement (World Fact Book 2014). The Center-Right coalition is mostly associated with Berlusconi's People of Freedom Party and the Northern League (World Fact Book 2014). The Italy Common good Party was a center-left coalition formed from the Democratic Party, The Left Ecology Freedom party, and the Italian Socialist Party along with other smaller groups (World Fact Book 2014). With Monti for Italy is considered the centrist party consisting of Civic Choice, Union of the Center, and Future and Freedom for Italy (World Fact Book 2014). After this fieldwork was conducted, Berlusconi lost control of his party and the Lega Nord is no longer part of the ruling coalition (BBC News 2016). After the 2013 election, the Lega Nord only received 4 percent of the vote, which was a historic low for the party (Passarelli 2014). This is significant for my research because the interviews were conducted the summer after the election, and Lega Nord's current popularity plays a role in participants' responses.

The Lega Nord is one of Italy's regionally focused political parties. Lega Nord was created in 1991 by the union of multiple regional Northern political parties (Giordano 2000). Lega Nord has backed its political union by inventing an ethnicity of Northern Italy, and constructed 'Padania', an ahistoric geographic region in

Northern Italy, which contains all of Italy's geographic regions north of the Po River (Comaroff and Comaroff 2009). Lega Nord created a political ethnic identity on a thin foundation, but promotes general values, which brought them Northern public support (Comaroff and Comaroff 2009). The invention of Padania shows the inconsistent malleability of political and ethnic identity due to the fact that the Lega Nord has been able to create this identity within a few years of popularity while a national Italian identity has been a work in progress for over 140 years (Giordano 2000). It also points to the instability of the Italian governmental system. Because the organization was founded within the dominant social group, it was not oppressed, but instead flourished throughout Northern areas that suffered from the mechanization of factory work (Capussotti 2010).

Lega Nord's political discourse states that the socio-economic success of the North and hard working Northerners have provided for Central and Southern Italy, and the lazy Southern Italians of lower economic status (Giordano 2000). Examples of this rhetoric can easily be found in party posters. Image 1 and 2 can be found at the end of the chapter. These two political posters show common Lega Nord sentiments. In Image 1, the Lega Nord is comparing themselves to Native Americans. This is to serve as a warning to be weary of immigrants and portrays Northerners as the victims of migration. Lega Nord's political rhetoric in this poster does not specify against internal or international migrant. However, Lega Nord discourse has been against both Southerners and foreign immigrants (Lega Nord). Image 2 is directly related to the North-South divide and shows its political stance on the government

in Rome and the Southern people. This image shows two Italies – Padania and Rome. Rome here can represent both the Italian government, which is housed in Rome, and the general Southern half of Italy. The image shows the fabled goose laying golden eggs with a woman, Rome, stealing the eggs and bringing them to the South. This political poster can be directly linked to the Lega Nord's principle that the Italian government and the South are stealing profits from the North in order to pay for government programs in the South (Girodano 2000).





Image 1 :“They suffered immigration, now they live on reservations!”



Image 2: “Wake up padano! With the Lega Nord against the stealing Rome”

### **Chapter 3: Review of the literature**

Regionalism and historic North/South tensions are a well-researched topic in the social sciences. My research looks at the separation and discrimination against Southern Italians and the politics and institutions that maintain a North/South divide. By using my fieldwork with Southern Italians living in the Northeastern city of Ferrara, Italy, my thesis will discuss how discrimination and migration complicate regionalism and identity. I will begin this literature review with a theoretical discussion of internal migration, identity and regionalism. Later in the chapter, I will discuss discrimination, exclusion, and racism. I will conclude by briefly discussing gaps in the literature, and explaining the role my research has in studying the intersectionality of migration with history, identity, marginalization and regionalism.

#### **Internal Migration**

The majority of migration studies focuses on transborder or transnational migration. However, it is also important to gain an understanding of internal migration, or migration of peoples within a nation state. Unfortunately, there is little literature on internal migration, and the articles that do discuss it focus on topics such as regionalism or economic disparity instead of larger internal migrant theory. Therefore, in order to understand internal migration, I will discuss the larger debate

of migration and extrapolate from the global level to understand and discuss regional migration.

Glick-Schiller and Blanc (1995) explain transmigrants as immigrants resulting from globalization who depend on multiple and continual interconnections across international borders. She also explains that transmigrants configure their public identities in relationship to both former and current nation-states (Glick-Schiller and Blanc 1995). Looking at the relationship between where a person migrated from and where they are currently residing is an important feature of transnational migration research (Blunt 2007). Using this framework, transnational migration is a verb because it is the process in which migrants “forge and sustain simultaneous multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement” (Glick-Schiller and Blanc 1995:48). Transmigrants cannot be considered “sojourners because they settle and become incorporated in the economy and political institutions, localities, and patters of daily life of the country in which they reside” (Glick-Schiller and Blanc 1995:48). However, globalization is reshaping capital accumulation, which is leading to the deterioration of social and economic conditions of both countries of origin and resettlement. The instability of economic conditions contributes to transmigrants’ identity construction because they are not able to fully settle in either country.

By instead looking at migration through the lens of mobile livelihoods, Olwig and Sorensen (2002) discuss migration as part of the “socio-culturally interconnected

nature of human life” and argue that migration literature needs to discuss the “importance of mobility to the relationship between people, place, identity and belonging “(2002:1;2). They reason that it is necessary to look at historical trends and not contemporary neoliberal migration. Olwig and Sorensen (2002) criticize transnationalism because they feel the term is ambiguous with the only defining factor being movement that crosses national boundaries. They also believe that it incorrectly closes the study of migration to only look at the narrow focus of international population movements (Olwig and Sorensen 2002). Stephen (2007) also disagrees with the term transnational in the book “Transborder Lives”. She argues that transborder should be used because the concept of border not only discusses the national geographical border, but also the social, cultural, linguistic, racial, gendered, ethnic, and labor borders that people must confront and navigate in everyday life (Stephen 2007). Olwig and Sorensen (2002) argue that migration studies need to look at the broader topics and “fluid fields” of social, political, economic and cultural relations of global mobile livelihoods.

While the term “transnational” cannot be used to discuss internal migration, I feel aspects of Glick-Schiller and Blanc’s (1995) framework for transnationalism can be applied to regional migration. Specifically, I believe Glick-Schiller and Blanc’s (1995) point of transmigrants never fully settling in the host location and the maintenance of social ties to their place of origin can be applied to regional migration and can be seen in my participants’ experiences living in Ferrara. As the Historic Background chapter shows, the historic context is necessary in

understanding Italy's current internal migrant experience, which supports Olwig and Sorensen's claims (2002). Olwig and Sorensen's (2002) framework of looking at the topics of social, political and economic relations in order to understand contemporary migrants' mobile livelihoods is important when studying the intersectionality of internal migration.

'Borders' are not geopolitically fixed lines and can instead serve as concepts separating and joining certain groups of people. While all regions in Italy are separated by geopolitical borders, Stephen's (2007) idea of a 'border' can be seen separating the North and South. As the Historical Background shows, the North and South of Italy have significant economic, racial, and political differences. These borders have created symbolic boundaries that Southern migrants must face when relocating in Northern Italy.

### Identity

Cultural identity as explained by Comaroff and Comaroff is "the object of choice and self construction, typically through the act of consumption" and as "the manifest product of biology, genetics, [and] human existence" (2009:1). Johnson and Coleman (2012) explain group identity to be based on relational cultural commonality while also relative contrast with the other.

Orton (2012) explains the assumptions that surround the concept of national identity. Orton discusses the assumption that national identity creates national

culture, and that national identity is constructed around national discourse of the past. In the case of Italy, Orton (2012) explains that the historical discourse is centered around the Unification, also called the Risorgimento, and projected by the state and Italian literary scholars who define what can be considered part of Italian culture. Orton (2012) makes three assumptions about national identity. She explains that the construction of a national identity inherently requires the exclusion of the other (Orton 2012). The second assumption being that national literature and national identity create themselves ahistorically (Orton 2012). Orton's explanation of the final assumption is that "national identity depends on a social construction of space that binds identity to a single territory" (2012:22).

These assumptions are backed by Das (2008) who discusses the social contract and violence of the state against its citizens. States work to create discourse of unity and obligation of the citizens existing within the state's territory. With this discourse, states work to create a sense of mutual identity that can be used for the states' purposes. In doing so, the state exerts violence against its citizens in order to ensure the labor force of its citizens. As discussed in the Historical Background, national identity is centered around the Risorgimento, but it was a creation of the Fascist state (Acquaviva and Santuccio 1978; Caprotti 2008; Orton 2012). Following Orton's (2012) assumptions, the creation of the Fascist national identity lead to the idea of a backwards, rural Southern "other."

However, identity is not only created by the state. While Comaroff and Comaroff (2009) explain that identity is often linked with politics, they also say that it is intertwined with ethnicity and has a connection to globalization. They explain that “ethnicity = cultural + identity” (Comaroff and Comaroff 2009:22). They explain the dimensions of identity business to include: belonging and exclusion, commerce producing an ethnic group, outside venture capital establishing ethno-economies, cultural differentiation, sovereign existence, claim to a defined piece of land, and commodification of cultural products and practices (Comaroff and Comaroff 2009:82). Therefore, the formation of identity is also created in order to commodify ethnicity and globally market the otherness of identity.

Physical space is an important feature of identity. As Johnson and Coleman (2012) explain, the power of the state, and therefore national identity, is defined by control over territory. It is within a defined space that a state holds sovereignty and people are able to unite with a common national identity. Space can also act as a binder for the creation of the other’s territory and identity (Johnson and Coleman 2012). It can be understood then that identity and a sense of community are in a way created on the determination and definition of space and the other.

### Regionalism

In this thesis, we will define regionalism as a commodified local form of identity located within the nation-state. Scholars will disagree on the definition of ‘regionalism’ and will sometimes consider it to be the same as ‘nationalism,’

especially in instances when the regional group wants more autonomy. There are also various forms of regionalism that scholars will discuss. With regionalism, there is a strong connection to land and historical solidarity. Johnson and Coleman (2012) explore how states create a regional other in order to build a national identity. Giordano's (2000) concern with regionalism is that it can promote "exclusion, fragmentation, and/or separatism, or alternatively [be] a mechanism for modifying state authority with the aim of gaining greater autonomy" (2000:448). This models the reality of Italy's situation with the perception of the North being industrialized while the South is backward, slow, and impoverished. Johnson and Coleman explain that othered regions are "constructed as repositories for backwardness and consequently become the spatial containers that are home to impediments to national progress" (2012:865).

There are multiple types of regionalism that need to be discussed in order to understand Italian regionalism. Institutional regionalism is the process of a state created regionalism for the states' benefit (Giordano 2000). Economic regionalism, as explained by Omhae (1995) is the ideology that regions are the geographic areas that share economic usage and status. The state's discourse on the north as the industrial region and the backbone of the economy lends to both of these forms of regionalism existing for the Italian situation (Mingione 1993, Giordano 2000).

Autonomist regionalism is "directly related to issues of ethnicity, culture and identity" (Giordano 2000:450). This form of regionalism is what is commonly



occurring with regional political movements such as the Lega Nord in Italy. While these movements can vary, Giordano points to three common elements including: opinions of the central state, identification of a territorial space, and the development of a group identity (Giordano 2000:451). These three elements of regionalism are very similar to Orton's (2012) three assumptions of national identity. Opinion of the central state as Giordano (2000) describes is very similar to Orton's (2012) assumption that national identity must be formed by creation of the other. For regional political groups, the state is the 'other.' Both Giordano (2000) and Orton (2012) discuss space and geographical location as being central to identity formation. Both regionalism and national identity also require the creation of an ethnic history to create solidarity within the identity movement.

Internal orientalism is an important part of Italian regionalism as it explains the Italian Southern "other." The 'other' can be defined as the one "who possessed certain undesirable characteristics that stand in the way of progress, unity, cohesion, and so on, can be assumed to inhabit a particular place based on empirical observation" (Johnson and Coleman 2012:865). State's discourse of regional othering is often defined by scholars as internal orientalism. Johnson and Coleman cite Jansson's definition of internal orientalism as "a discourse that operates within the boundaries of a state, a discourse that involves the othering of a (relatively) weak region by a more powerful region (or regions) within the state" (Jansson 2003 cited in Johnson and Coleman 2012:867). This definition very strongly represents the North-South Italian divide. Giordano explains that in the 1960's, many countries

in Europe adopted regional development policies (Giordano 2000). The Italians for example, created the Cassa per il Mezzogiorno (The Fund for the South) (Giordano 2000). While attempting to increase economic output and support for the central authority, states highlighted regional underdevelopment and differences. The results of these policies in Europe varied, and the politics of regional development became polarized. Some regions became more industrial and increased economic output while others gained regional ethnic identities (Giordano 2000).

### Discrimination and Racism

Discrimination is an umbrella term; it is the term to use to discuss the concepts of racism, exclusion, sexism, anti-Semitism, etc. Within the umbrella of internal migration discrimination we have theories of inclusion/exclusion, multiple types of racism, and “us”/“them” rhetoric (Delanty, Jones, and Wodak 2011). Migratory discrimination is intrinsically linked to concepts of identity that are marked by both cultural and historical conditions. These concepts are so webbed within the literature that it is difficult to separate them. Historical prejudices and racism are often the foundation for ‘us’/‘them’ rhetoric, and yet, those terms are often not thought of as racist (Wodak 2011).

This is because, as Wodak (2011) points out, racism is a taboo topic and people are very unlikely to admit to a racist situation. We instead have softer terms created like social exclusion and the ‘other.’ As she explains, the term ‘racism’ has very different connotations in Europe and the United States, and is often missing from

Post-WWII literature in Europe because of its historical anti-Semitic connotation (Wodak 2011). However, literature about internal migration in Italy shows a variety of racial discriminatory terms used and I therefore need to address many of them to get a full picture of the topic.

Syncretic racism is “the construction of ‘differences’ on many levels, which serve ideological, political, and/or practical discrimination on all levels of society” (Delanty, Jones and Wodak 2011:3). This differs slightly from their definition of ‘new’ racism which is:

“not expressed in overtly racist terms or in the terms of neo-fascist discourse, for instance by some notion of biologically or racial superiority, white supremacism or skin colour. Instead, the repertoires of justification that are typically employed use social characteristics (for example, protecting jobs, concern about welfare benefits) or cultural incompatibilities or differences (migrants lack ‘cultural competences’ ‘they do not want to integrate,’ ‘they are not tolerant’). The new racism exploits established xenophobic frames (fear of the other), ethnocentrism, masculinities and ‘ordinary’ ways that are unconscious or routinized” (Delanty, Jones, and Wodak 2011:2).

‘New’ racism is slightly different from Krichler and Zani’s (1995) definition of ‘modern’ racism which is “the rejection of gross stereotypes of blatant discrimination, the opposition to racial changes for ostensibly non-racial reasons that is intensified by group-based self-interest and a sense of subjective threat from

racial change as well as particular views of how opportunity and social stratification operate in the society” (Kirchler and Zani 1995:60). Kirchler and Zani’s (1995) definition can be seen directly at play with the type of racism used by the Lega Nord and their rhetoric and motivations to create a Northern separatist movement.

Government policies and discrimination can often be classified as institutional racism, which “is distinguished from the prejudice, stereotyping and bigotry or the racial bias of individuals by the existence of systematically disadvantaging certain radicalized groups” (Delanty, Jones, and Wodak 2011:5). With this definition, we can see that many government policies discussed in Chapter 2, which have led to the increasing regional economic divide in Italy, can be explained as institutional racism against Southern regions.

### Gaps in the Literature

Previous research has shown the existence of a regional divide that contributes to a marginalization of Southern Italians (Checci and Paragine 2005, Manacorda and Petrongolo 2005, Caprotti 2008, Capussotti 2010, Etzo 2011, Johnson and Coleman 2012, Eurostat 2016). There are various contributors to this separation including the historic, economic, and political divide, but previous literature does not look at the intersectionality of how regionalism, economic disparity, stereotypes and politics together impact the lived experience of a Southern internal migrant.

Literature theorizes about borders and discrimination, and the historic literature to explain how the racist discourse created the racial regional binary. However, with

this thesis, I take this literature and applied it to my fieldwork in order to gain a better understanding of how these theoretical understandings of the new regional racism is experienced by Southern Italians. This literature greatly shapes my results chapters, and hopefully this thesis will serve as a way to fill the gaps on the Italian migrant experience.

## **Chapter 4: Methodology**

The main objective of this research is to narrate the lived experience of Italians living in the Emilia-Romagna region of Italy where they might be considered the “other,” and to look at how being the othered minority group impacted their migration. A qualitative ethnographic approach was used in this study. This choice was made largely due to the limited number of available participants and the descriptive, exploratory questions being addressed. Qualitative methods allowed for greater depth of understanding regarding personal experience that can be gained from these methods.

Questions regarding identity and recollection of experiences are best examined through qualitative methods. Interview questions were formulated to discuss participants’ opinion of regionalism in Italy. These questions explored how their migration impacted their perceptions of regionalism and identity. Open-ended questions were necessary to get adequate responses for in-depth analysis.

Methods utilized in this study include: participant observation, informative informal conversations, semi-structured interviews, and free listing. This chapter will also explain the participants involved, the analysis performed, and the limitations of the study.

### Research Participants

Participants in this study were found through chain referrals, which originated with the connections of my host family and university friends I had in town. To avoid potential bias, my host family is not included as participants. Some participants were more willing to open up about their personal feelings than others. Everyone was very surprised that I wanted to study them and their migratory experience. While all my participants are originally from Southern Italy, the group was split between Naples and Sicily. Three of my participants were students at the University of Ferrara and three were adults working in town. The adults in my study are established permanently in the North with no plans of moving back to Southern Italy. My students, however, are in a somewhat more transitional state, and plan on moving wherever they can find work after college. I am still considering these students as migrants for this study because their economic motivations in moving to Ferrara were the same as the established adults. The migratory experiences of these students are also in line with those that my adults described. In addition, having both new and established migrants in the study allows for a comparison of migrants' experiences over time. Both groups also explained that while they live in the Emilia-Romagna region, they would travel South every summer, as well as other various holidays, in order to visit family and friends.

### Participant observation

Participant observation is a classical method in anthropology that involves the observation of and participation in activities of the research subjects. This method

aids in the understanding of complex situations by allowing the researcher access to not only what their participants say, but also how they act within their own environment (Creswell 2009). Participant observation is a thorough research method because it provides both descriptive and factual information about participants and their environment (Patton 2002). By using participant observation, I was able gain a more comprehensive understanding of my participants' everyday lives and interactions.

For this study, I acted as a participant observer at events I attended with participants, and daily observations in town. I was able to observe social circles and interactions that took place in the Ferrara community. These details were then helpful in enriching my interview information, which can be seen in my results chapters.

#### Informal conversations

During the summer of my fieldwork, I held conversations about Italian regionalism with people outside my participatory group in the Ferrara community. Informal conversations can sometimes be referred to as “unstructured interviewing.” (Patton 2002). However, I did not ask to interview these people, nor were questions directed towards their own experience. These conversations were instead generated out of quick conversations explaining why I, as an American student, was spending my summer in a small town in Italy. It is for this reason that I refer to these as conversations rather than interviews. Also, the information I gathered from these



informants generally came from opinions or advice that was given without prompting. From these conversations, I was able to gather further potential directions for my research, such as looking into the Southern mafia's involvement in Northern cities, as well as Northerner's opinions on where the geographical boundary separates the North from the South.

### Semi-structured interviews

Little ethnographic research exists on the lived experience of Southern Italians living in Northern Italy. There are reports on the economic incentives and effects of South-to-North migration and concern over how rising feelings of regionalism impact internal migration, but no ethnographic narratives. Therefore, qualitative interviews needed to be conducted to understand the experience of Southern Italians.

Semi-structured interviews were chosen to allow for predetermined questions while also allowing the conversation to flow based on the participants' responses. Open-ended questions in this style of interview allow for a greater depth of responses in participants own terms (Patton 2002). This then allows me to better capture participants' points of view. All interviews were conducted in the participants' homes or at the home of a close friend of the participant so that they felt comfortable (Creswell 2009). Some of the interviews were done casually before dinner parties, but others were conducted one-on-one in the afternoon. As the research participant section of this chapter explains, two couples were interviewed.

While they were each asked questions individually, the partners were present in the room for part of these interviews.

### Free listing

Free listing was attempted with the first three participants with the intention of doing a textual keyword analysis. Questions asked dealt with their opinion of the geographical border between the North and South and what it meant to be a Southerner, and an Italian. Free listing was used to help define the cultural domain of a region and national identities, and serve as a comparison to existing stereotypes. However, it soon became clear that participants had a difficult time thinking of words to answer the questions, and instead preferred to give a longer paragraph narrative response. After discussion with these participants, it was decided to switch methods and incorporate the free listing questions into the semi-structured interviews. In order to still have consistency, the questions were asked with the exact wording during the interviews.

### Language

All the interviews were conducted in the participants' native language of Italian. All transcriptions were kept in the original Italian in order to maintain participants' intention for the analysis. Great care was taken in providing accurate translation of quotes for the results chapter. Not all translations are word for word as certain colloquial phrases would have no meaning in English. When this occurred, the meaning was derived from the phrase to provide the most accurate translation.

### Data analysis

An inductive data analysis, or grounded theory, was used on the participant observation and interview data. I used this theory to guide my initial coding of field notes and transcripts in order to find themes.

### Content Analysis

A textual analysis was also done to systematically look at the specific words and phrases participants used to find patterns. Content analysis can be considered any technique that systematically identifies patterns within text (Berg 2004). This technique was used to look at how participants used terminology regarding regionalism and nationalism as well as the strength of terms that were used for discrimination.

### Limitations

One of the biggest limitations was conducting fieldwork in the summer due to the Italian style of long vacations. The first three interviews occurred in the first week of fieldwork. However, I then waited another three weeks to interview again because of participants' vacation schedules. Overall, the summer limited the number of participants I was able to interview. While there were few interviews conducted, the majority of the respondents responded in similar ways and conclusions can be made from the data collected.

A second limitation was that, as a non-native observer, it was difficult to make observations about Southern and Northern Italian interactions at large citywide events. While I am aware of certain dialect traits of some regions, I am not knowledgeable enough to identify a person's home city accurately without talking with them directly. Because of this, I was limited in my participant observations to events I attended with the interviewees of my study.

## **Chapter 5: Findings and Discussion: Motivations for Migration**

The results from my interviews agreed with the literature in that the main reason for migration is economic incentives – there are simply more opportunities in the North. There is a difference in the type of jobs available regionally with more skilled and professional jobs existing in larger Northern cities. Those with professional degrees, and also college students seeking professional degrees, are more inclined to migrate to an area that is economically suited for their resume. One thing not as prevalent in the literature that I am adding is education as a category of economic incentives. As I explained in Chapter 4, students are considered migrants in this study because their educational choice of a Northern school align with other migrants' economic reasoning for migration. Therefore, I am considering educational migration a subcategory of economic incentives for migration.

With a better understanding of my participants reasoning for migration, we can once again look at the different frameworks of migration theory. Economic motivations as an aspect of the migrant experience supports Olwig and Sorensen's (2002) argument of looking at the broader fields of migration to include economic political and ethnic relations, which impact their mobile lives.

Roberta and Carlo noted also that the better universities are in the North, which will potentially lead to better job opportunities for them after graduation. While having

gone to a Southern university and finding work in the North, Anna also mentioned that the higher ranked schools exist in Northern Italy. The current statistics match their opinions. In 2014, Emilia-Romagna's unemployment rate was 8.3 percent while Campagnia and Sicily, the original regions of the participants in the study, had unemployment rates of 21.7 percent and 22.2 percent respectively (Eurostat 2016). Therefore, statistically, Carlo, Paola, and Roberta will have much better opportunities for internships and jobs in the North when the graduate. Carlo went into great detail about the differences between Northern and Southern universities, particularly regarding both funding and administration. As he explains:

Universities receive funding based on their quality. The higher the University's ranking, the more funding they receive. Since the rank of the Southern universities is lower than those of the North, it is as if they were always destined to receive less funds and thus are not able to improve, right?

He also then went on to talk about how the administrative systems "are two completely diverse situations between the North and South." When describing the university in Ferrara, he uses words and phrases such as "more organized" and "system." However, when describing his previous university in Sicily, which he attended for a year before transferring, Carlo uses terms like "shortage" and "disorganized." Roberta's reasoning was the same explaining that she "decided to come here to Ferrara because the faculty for [her] major is the best in Italy." Northern schools are simply better. Better funded, and therefore, better staffed. By transferring to Northern universities, their economic potential increases.

The inequality in regional economic potential for college graduates is nothing new in Italy. As Anna explained, she and Gianluca had to move to Bergamo for work when they graduated college, because there were no jobs available for them around Naples, where their university was located. Instead, in order to find professional work, they had to leave the area and move north. This motivation for migration is supported by Manacorda and Petrongolo's (2005) research, which looks at regional mismatch in unemployment from 1977-1998. The end part of this time 20 year period being when Anna and Gianluca were looking for work. Nationally, from 1977-98, unemployment increased from 7 to 12 percent (Manacorda and Petrongolo 2005). However, the increase in unemployment in this time frame was concentrated in the South. Between 1977 and 1998, the Southern unemployment rate rose from 10 to 22 percent, whereas the unemployment rate in the North moved slightly from 6 to 7 percent (Manacorda and Petrongolo 2005). Rise in unemployment at the time was linked to aggregate labor demand, oil price shocks, wage pressure and a fall in the investment/GDP ratio according to their study (Manacorda and Petrongolo 2005). Neither Gianluca nor Anna came out and specifically said that they don't think they would be able to find work in the South now. They did explain though, that there will be more opportunities for their children while they remain in the North, and it is partially with this motivation that they remain in Ferrara.

The one participant that didn't specifically migrate for economic reasons is Gabriele. Gabriele is a police officer, and wanted to be transferred out of Naples to a Northern city. He instead cites the high amount of corruption in the workplace for his motivation to move to a smaller Northern city away from the Camorra, the main mafia organization in Southern Italy. He even goes as far as to call the crime in the North "petty crime" (microcriminalità) and the crime in Naples as "macro-crime" (macrocriminalità). Within this study, Gabriele is an outlier in regards to his motivation for migration. However, his choice is still somewhat economic since he wanted to stay away from the system of bribes that he felt controlled his career.

These motivations for migration and the stark economic regional differences that exist in Italy can lead to a discussion of the larger regional inequality. There are links between the regional economic situations and the stereotyped prejudices of Southern Italians as lazy and not wanting to work. Currently there is an unemployment rate of 22 percent in Southern Italy (ISTAT 2016). It might not be a matter of wanting to work, but instead not being able to even find any work. However, the negative stereotype is attached to Southern Italians. As noted by Giordano (2008), Italian economic policies such as Cassa per il Mezzogiorno, a policy specifically written to help the South, still managed to polarize and industrialize only certain regions.

This connection of economic mismatch and stereotyping as well as the regional mismatch of strong educational fit within the institutional racism framework of



Delanty, Jones, and Wodak (2011) and the concept of borders of Stephens (2007). Universities in the South are systematically disadvantaged due to lack of funding which cause administrative and academic disorganization. This leads Southern Italians to be disadvantaged and negatively stereotyped within the social and economic stratification of those with professional degrees. This racism then perpetuates further economic and racial borders that Southern Italians must navigate in Northern Italy.

## **Chapter 6: Findings and Discussion: Perceptions of Difference**

There are numerous trends that my participants cited regarding the differences between the North and the South. These stereotypes are regarded as regional cultural norms. A list of these stereotypes can be found in Appendix I. Many of these stereotypes are dichotomous and there is an overlap between these differences, such as the climate impacting personality, and the usage of othering terminology. These stereotypes contribute to the experiences of discrimination Southern Italians face while navigating Northern borders. However, one notable difference amongst participants is their opinions of acceptance and discrimination that they currently experience living in the North. This divide is significant in that it happens between the college students, who have spent only a few years in the north, and the working professionals, who have all spent at least 15 years in various cities in the North. I will begin this chapter by discussing ideas that the participants all shared. Then, I will look into the generational divide, which has contributed to their differing migratory experience.

### Weather

When asked why there is a separation between the North and South, a reoccurring theme that occurred in the interviews was a discussion about weather and climate. A commonly held notion is that the temperature contributes to a community's personality and that these temperatures and personality traits are linked with

identity as a Northerner or Southerner. The cold weather and harsher winters of the North create a personality “più freddo” (colder), closed and more cautious. The hot summers and sunny winters of the Southern Mediterranean lead to a personality that could easily get angry, but that is also open, welcoming, and “più caldo” (warm). When asked why there is a difference between Northern and Southern Italians, Gabriele simply stated, “because of the sun and the sea.” When I laughed and said how Italy is a peninsula – the ocean is reachable from basically everywhere. He just smiled and said “no.” He explained that the air, the atmosphere, the colors, the life of the city changes between the North and the South and this in turn impacts peoples’ personalities.

This concept did not appear in any of my literature on migration as I was preparing for my fieldwork so I was not expecting the theme to appear during my interviews. After doing some post-fieldwork literature searching, I discovered that the idea of climate impacting personality is studied in psychology, and there have been multiple articles published on the subject in journals such as the *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* and the *European Journal of Personality*. This literature shows that not only is a belief held by my participants, but one that has been proven throughout social research (Pennebaker et al. 1996; McCrae et al 2007). Discourse describing personality that can also be adjectives for weather, such as cold and warm, are very common globally and the stereotyped beliefs are present throughout Europe (McCrae et al 2007). These stereotyped beliefs about North-South personality differences contribute to the strong regional divisions in

Italy. These stereotypes paired with negative political discourse and institutional racism contributes to the discrimination against Southern Italians.

### 'Us' versus 'Them'

Italian verbs are conjugated which allows for the speaker to specify the subject within the verb. While analyzing research, these conjugated verbs are a useful tool to track how participants group themselves. When they use the verb form for 'we' versus the verb form for 'they' can show a participants feelings of inclusion, exclusion, and regional or national identification. Utilizing content analysis, it quickly became clear that all of the participants would use the verb form for 'we' when discussing an aspect of Southern Italians, their habits, stereotypes, cultural norms, and even general opinions on matters of life. "This is how we [do this]..." or "We think [this way]..." were phrases used by my participants regarding the choices of Southern Italians. It is as though these opinions are universal group truths and all the participants felt comfortable stating their opinion as though it was representative of all Southern Italians. Participants also made a separation when discussing Northern Italians by using the term 'they.' Regardless of length of time living in the North, all members of the study maintained a distance and would use the term 'they' when referring to events and norms that involved Northerners. On occasion, participants would use 'we' when discussing Italians as a whole, but this was only in comparison to other nationalities.

This discourse shows a continuous link to Southern Italy and Southern identity for all participants in the study regardless of how long ago migration occurred. Their choice in verb form to use 'we' in these situations shows a sense of identity that is regionally grouped due to the regional cultural commonality. As we know from the historical background, this Southern group identity has existed since before the Risorgimento. However, as Comaroff and Comaroff (2009) explain, this group identity isn't only linked to historical political discourse by also exclusion and regional economic division. Therefore, by simply analyzing the usage of the verb form for 'we' and 'they', I can conclude that my participants possess a regional identity that is based on Southern grouping and separation from Northern Italy. The usage of 'we' when referring to Southerners was just as common from Gabriele, who migrated 22 years ago, as it was from Carlo, who has only lived in Ferrara for four years. The fact that even the veteran migrants were using the term 'they' to refer to other members of their city shows that even after 11 or 15 years, Southern Italians remained a marginalized 'other' and have not become included members of the community.

### Adapting to Migration

Adattarsi – to adapt oneself, to conform to, or comply with a new reality (WordReference.com). This word comes up continuously in the conversations with Gabriele, Anna, and Gianluca. They also used similar terminology and phrases to explain what it was like moving North. Anna explained, "we became acclimated to here." Gabriele explained for he and his wife: "we get used to it easily, we adapt."

One interesting thing to note about Gabriele's comment is that while he is very carefree about saying it is easy to adapt, he uses the present tense of the verb even though in other parts of the interview he used various past tense verbiage. From his chose of terminology about adapting in our conversation, it can be concluded that he probably didn't adapt quickly, and instead is an ongoing process.

When trying to understand this need for adaptation, I think Anna explains it best:

I had to adapt, open my mind that made me sure that they accepted me.

You'll have to put in a position to say, "I'm smarter, more intelligent, it's me that I have to adapt to you and ensure that you can change your mind." Often it is not like this, often you go and say, "You do not want me, then I hate you", and then the conflicts arise.

Anna's explanation, and Gianluca and Gabriele's interviews all show reconciliation to their situation. Over the 15 plus years in the North, they have accepted the regional differences and their situation. Kirchler and Zani (1995) found similar results in Bologna. Once Southern Italians 'assimilated' to their Northern city, they are much more likely to accept and defend Northern values and culture (Kirchler and Zani 1995). While I don't like or agree with Kirchler and Zani's use of the term 'assimilate,' his study does confirm what I have found with my participants. Neither Roberta, Carlo, nor Paola used the term 'addatarsi' or even 'accettarsi' (to accept) in any form during their interview. I would argue that this is because they haven't adapted to living in the North yet.

Gianluca, Anna, and Gabriele's experiences of adaptation to life in Northern Italy are the outcome of a variety of factors, which play a role in their everyday lives. Olwig and Sorensen (2002) discuss the interconnected relationships between people, identity, and place. While Anna mentions that the Lega Nord and North-South political relations are not as bad as they used to be post-Arab Spring, the racist political discourse remains a part of daily life. Existing stereotypes are not easily forgotten; government programs and university funding perpetuate inequality. These discriminatory hurdles along with ethnic regional divisions create borders that must be navigated daily. Utilizing present tense verbiage to explain adaptation also supports Glick-Schiller and Blanc's (1995) argument that migrants never fully settle in their host location. It is an ongoing, ever-present process.

### Generational Divide

Paola, Carlo, and Roberta are relatively new to the North. Having just arrived in the last four years for college at the time of the interview. The three college students all reported having difficult experiences with the Ferrarese students. They discussed the closed off nature of the local students, and how it was easier make friends with others who had travelled to go to school there, such as other Southerners and international Erasmus students. Their discussions about the differences between the North and the South were much longer, as they were able to list and discuss more divisions between the regions. Their emotions and difficulties with their experience of migration could even be heard in their voice as they described the difficulties of making friends and living in a new city.

They are also very vocal about their sense of regionalism. Paola explained that before moving to the North, she thought of herself as Sicilian. However, now Paola explains: "When I think of a person from Bari or Lecce or Palermo, I think of someone from home." Living in the North has increased Paola, Roberta, and Carlo's sense of dual regionalism because they have been able to meet and relate with other Southern Italians at their universities. They are now not only Sicilian, but Southerners.

Anna, Gianluca, and Gabriele all still use the term 'we' when referring to ideas and characteristics of Southern Italians. However, they also stated that they thought the people of Emilia-Romagna were welcoming. The adults did list many of the same characteristics that stereotype the dichotomous regionalism, but they made sure to note that these are stereotypes and can differ by personality. Anna noted that while Northerners might be more closed off at first, they were much more trustworthy and truer friends once you became close. When explaining that stereotypes cannot be representative of the whole, she gave the example of how she and Gianluca actually keep in touch with a few friends that they were close to when living in Bergamo.

Both age groups have had similar experiences within their age group. However, the two age groups have contradictory experiences. It is unclear if their difference is due to an overall generational shift in attitude towards Southern migrations, but I



believe that there are numerous factors, which contribute to this generational divide.

Regional movements and political parties began to rise throughout Europe again in the 1990's (Daes and Lord 2006). It is in this time that Gianluca, Anna, and Gabriele were migrating to the North and around when Roberta, Paola, and Carlo were born. I believe their diverse experiences are in part the result of this regional and Lega Nord rhetoric. Gianluca, Anna, and Gabriele lived in the North through the height of Lega Nord and Padania popularity. Therefore, today, regionalism and political discrimination in Ferrara can be considered relatively very mild to them. Gianluca and Anna also lived in Bergamo for a number of years and made comments explaining how relatively, Ferrara is much better in terms of prejudices and discrimination.

However, Roberta, Paola, and Carlo grew up in this era of strong regionalism and regional rhetoric. They are also now going to school with Northern 20-somethings who also were raised with this rhetoric of exclusion. (Giordano 2000). When chatting with a college age Northerner, he said to me, "Italy is the perfect place to study regionalism. The North and South are complete different. They are two different countries." This sentiment is the result of growing up in this era of regional exclusionary discourse and regional identity as a cultural norm.

Paola, Carlo, and Roberta have grown up in this era of regionalism, and their experience in the North is in attempting to socialize with other Northern Italians who grew up with this same rhetoric is reflected in their difficulty to 'adapt' as Gianluca, Anna and Gabriele have. At the same time, the need to adapt is also a result of the exclusion for Southern migrants. Therefore, both groups of student and existing migrants have experienced exclusion leading to a deepening of regional identity post migration.

The other factor is that over time, migrants have learned to accept and normalize Northern behavior and prejudices. Anna for example only called it "prejudice" a handful of times while instead referring to Northern racist ideals as "misconceptions" of Southerners. This contradicts the fact that, compared to all the other participants, she gave me the most overt examples of discrimination in our interview. Carlo instead had no problem directly referring to Northerners' actions as prejudices and discrimination. Carlo and Paola are very quick to address and admit to the inequalities between the North and the South. Therefore, historic and political events that occurred during different periods of participant's lives impacts their view of the racism and regionalism that they experience as a Southern Italian migrant.

## **Chapter 7: Conclusions**

I began my research with three main research questions. Do Italians form regional identities? How have Italian migrants' perceptions of identity been altered by their move to the Emilia-Romagna region? And how have politics and regional political rhetoric contributed to the migrant experience? I found that migrants do seem to form regional identities. Regional identification was heightened for some of my participants as a result of the discrimination and exclusion that they experienced while living in Northern Italy. This Southern regionalism is therefore intrinsically linked to their identity. My research also found that historic and recent political rhetoric can be found in the stereotypes that divide the North and South. These stereotypes contribute to the Southern migratory experience because they perpetuate discrimination and the new racism.

### **Areas for further investigation**

Regionalism and the racist discourse of the internal other is not a trend specific to Italy. It is in fact a global occurrence. This research is therefore applicable to many international situations of identity and ethnicity that create both shared exchanges and cultural tensions. With the increase in migration for work, it is important to learn and understand how migrants form their identities, and how the new environment shapes their identity in comparison to the locals of that area. While

my study focuses on Italians from different regions, this information can play an important role in understanding interactions and tensions between ethnic groups.

The goal of this thesis was to look at the current regional divide in Italy and how this impacted Southern Italians living in Ferrara. Italians form regional identities, and while my veteran participants noted the lessening of discrimination, the North-South binary does still exist. This is because the racist regional discrimination against Southern Italians can be traced back to the foundation of the modern Italian State. From the beginning of the Risorgimento in 1861 through the Fascist era of the 1930's, Northern political groups and the ruling government have considered Southern Italy to be racially inferior (Aquarone 1974, Scarpino 2005, Caprotti 2008, Pugliese 2008, Law 2014, Smith 2014). While these sentiments are not overtly part of today's government, racist political parties such as the Lega Nord have been allowed to form. Their political posters and cartoons perpetuate exclusion in everyday life and move a political opinion into mainstream pop culture discourse. My Southern Italian participants also pointed to other less political aspects of difference within Italy, such as the weather, as reasoning for the characteristic divide. Regardless of how many years they have lived in the North, all participants also maintained an 'us' versus 'them' mentality when explain North and South communities. Therefore, even when discussing "adapting" to the North, they still do not feel part of the local community.

The most unexpected result was the generational divide between experiences of Southern Italians. After finding this result in my analysis, I was only able to discover one other article that mentions this difference (Kirchler and Zani 1995). The explanation of migratory experience, changed with the longer the participants lived in Northern Italy. This result is significant as it can be applied to research in so many other areas of migration and discrimination studies.

The North-South divide is frequently discussed in literature and my research was exploratory in order to understand how migrants experience this binary. Through this research, I found that there are many gaps and areas for future investigation. As I mentioned, one particular area that I think should be looked into further is the generational divide of internal migration. It was by chance that my participants were equally divided between two different generations. A study could be expanded to include Northern Italians and their generational opinions in order to get a better understanding of how Lega Nord's political discourse influenced regional discrimination over time.

I also believe further studies can be done to look at the next generation. The children of Anna, Gianluca, and Gabriele, whom have grown up living in the North with only seasonal trips South to see family, were not part of this study. Technology has impacted human mobility and communication. This has complicated regional identity because it has given rise to people who identify with multi-cultures, those that feel connected to both their previous and current communities. Technological

advancements have provided migrants with the ability to maintain close contact with migrants' original communities instead of a homogenous national population. For younger generations, such as Anna, Gianluca, and Gabriele's children, this technology has always allowed for frequent contact with family and friends living in Naples and other regions of Italy. This interconnectedness with non-local people and places greatly impacts their view of identity in ways not possible for past generations. I believe that their view will be completely different from both groups that I studied and it would be interesting to see which region these second generation migrants identify with, or if there is a greater emergence of Italian nationalism since they do not cleanly fit into either a Northern or Southern regional group.

#### Last remarks

One question that I asked all my participants was if there was one, two, or many Italies. Basically, I was asking to see how strong is regionalism is and if it supersedes nationalism? Are there two – just the Southern and Northern regions? Or instead, is each region diverse? Consensus was never fully reached amongst my participants. As Anna explained, 'the big difference between the North in the South doesn't exist anymore [...] because now [with all the migration] the North is a colony of the South.' She is explaining that because so many Southerners have migrated to the North, today the regions are culturally intermixed. No one could fully give a clear answer to this as they all had strong feelings of both regional and national pride. The South is their original home; it is part of their identity. However, they all seem

to realize the dangers of being too regionally centered. As I look through all my data, I have come to the conclusion that there is actually an Italy for every person. While my participants all shared similar views on many of the issues of their migratory experience, their experiences were still each their own, and because of this, they all have their own stories, their own histories, their own Italies.

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**Appendix I**

<b>Common Stereotyped differences between Northern and Southern Italians</b>	
<b>Northern</b>	<b>Southern</b>
cold	hot headed
uninviting	welcoming
distant	talkative
reserved	friendly
logical	gluttonous
logical	lazy
hardworking	messy
in style	backward
urban	aggressively masculine (for men)
current	rural
smart	poor
	stupid